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Rights of the Child

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Twenty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (PUBLIC)*
OF THE 557th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 4 June 1999, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. MBOI

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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

* No summary records were issued for the 553rd to 556th meetings, or for the first part (closed) of the 557th meeting.

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.99-42270 (E)

The discussion covered in the summary record began at 11.30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS TWENTY-FIRST SESSION (CRC/C/87)

1. The CHAIRPERSON said that in its new composition the Committee was equipped as never before to implement a holistic approach to the Convention. Delegations, observers and non-governmental organizations, too, had made outstanding contributions to the work of the session. Consequently, the Committee had found the twenty-first session one of the most interesting and informative it had ever held. The delegations had been of impressive quality, extremely willing to exchange ideas with the Committee, aware of their responsibilities under the Convention, and dedicated to advancing the cause of children and their rights. National circumstances, priorities and cultures at some times facilitated, at others hindered the full, impartial implementation of the Convention. The Committee therefore trusted that its questions, suggestions and recommendations were providing encouragement and support to States parties in the ongoing process of fostering children's rights everywhere.

2. She invited the Committee to turn to the adoption of the report on its twenty-first session (CRC/C/87). Chapter I of the report was entitled "Organizational and other matters".

3. If she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt chapter I of the report.

4. Chapter I of the report was adopted.

5. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Committee to turn to consideration of chapter III of the report, entitled "Overview of the other activities of the Committee". Referring to its section D, she reminded members that it had been agreed to postpone the Committee's next thematic debate until the year 2000, and instead to hold a two-day meeting at the twenty-second session, entitled "The Convention on the Rights of the Child: a decade of achievements and challenges". Details of the forthcoming meeting were contained in annex IV to the report.

6. If she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt chapter III of the report.

7. Chapter III of the report was adopted.

8. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Committee to consider the draft provisional agenda for its next session, which was contained in chapter IV of the report.

9. The draft provisional agenda for the twenty-second session was adopted.

10. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Rapporteur to present chapter II of the report, entitled "Reports by States parties under article 44 of the Convention", which contained the Committee's draft concluding observations on the reports of Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Honduras, Benin, Chad and Nicaragua.

11. Mr. DOEK (Rapporteur) highlighted the salient points of the Committee's concluding observations on the reports submitted by States parties.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Barbados (CRC/C/15/Add.103)

12. The concluding observations concerning the initial report of Barbados (CRC/C/3/Add.45) were adopted.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Saint Kitts and Nevis (CRC/C/15/Add.104)

13. The concluding observations concerning the initial report of Saint Kitts and Nevis (CRC/C/3/Add.51) were adopted.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Honduras (CRC/C/15/Add.105)

14. The concluding observations concerning the second periodic report of Honduras (CRC/C/65/Add.2) were adopted.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Benin (CRC/C/15/Add.106)

15. The concluding observations concerning the initial report of Benin (CRC/C/33/Add.52) were adopted.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Chad (CRC/C/15/Add.107)

16. The concluding observations concerning the initial report of Chad (CRC/C/3/Add.50) were adopted.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Nicaragua (CRC/C/15/Add.108)

17. The concluding observations concerning the second periodic report of Nicaragua (CRC/C/65/Add.4) were adopted.

18. Chapter II of the report was adopted as a whole.

19. The CHAIRPERSON said that in the absence of any objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report on its twenty-first session (CRC/C/87) in its entirety.

20. The draft report of the Committee on its twenty-first session was adopted.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

21. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRPERSON declared the twenty-first session of the Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Twenty-second session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 558th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 20 September 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. MBOI

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES

* No summary record was issued for the rest of the meeting.

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GE.99-44256 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the twenty-second session of the Committee.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Mr. RAMCHARAN (Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the eve of the new millennium, when the Committee was commemorating the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, was a good moment for States parties to take stock of the implementation of the Convention and assess how much remained to be done. Promotion and protection of the rights of the child was one of the main priorities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), and the Committee had been and would continue to be a catalyst for the improvement of the situation of children throughout the world and the concrete realization of the principles and provisions of the Convention.

3. As part of its commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, the Economic and Social Council had devoted a high-level segment discussion on 6 July 1999 to the rights of the child. In the spirit of the Convention, a number of adolescents had taken part. Much interest had also been aroused by the special meeting the Committee was to hold during the current session, which he hoped would result in concrete recommendations. On 20 November 1999, the date of the commemoration of the General Assembly's adoption of the Convention, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, would receive in Geneva children representing socio-economically disadvantaged groups, from a wide range of countries. The meeting would be the culmination of a week-long gathering organized by a French NGO, ATD Quart-Monde. The General Assembly would also be paying particular attention to the rights of the child in the debate in the Third Committee and would keep the Committee informed of developments there.

4. Referring to the Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, he said that two new members had joined the implementation team in July and that assistance would be given to the Committee in drafting its general comments and in clearing the backlog of reports to be considered.

5. With regard to juvenile justice, he said that the High Commissioner had decided to pay close attention to the issue and planned to propose a major international conference on the subject, to be organized in 2002.

6. At its April 1999 meeting in Geneva, the International Coordinating Committee on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child had decided to prioritize the issue of human rights and to organize a workshop on the rights of the child during the fourth annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions held

in Manila. That regional meeting, which had taken place on 9 and 10 September, had been instrumental in integrating a child rights dimension into the work of such institutions and would be followed by another meeting in 2000 in Morocco.

7. UNHCHR had also decided to give higher priority to the issue of trafficking in women and children and had established various cooperation mechanisms and taken bilateral and regional initiatives to address the problem (specifically the formulation of the draft treaty on preventing and combating trafficking in women and children for the purposes of prostitution). In Europe, UNHCHR was working on that issue with the Council of Europe in four countries of central and eastern Europe (including Bosnia and Herzegovina).

8. With regard to other developments in the field of child rights since the preceding session, he reported that the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery had focused on the issue of trafficking in women and children and identified it as a priority area for 1999. The Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had visited Guatemala between 19 and 30 July 1999 to study the situation there and was due to visit Fiji shortly. The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights had addressed many mandates directly related to children's rights (the right to education, traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child, the administration of justice and human rights, including the application of international standards concerning the human rights of detained juveniles and the death penalty, particularly in relation to juvenile offenders). Lastly, he reported that the Security Council had for the first time adopted a resolution (1261 (1999)) strongly condemning the involvement of children under the age of 15 in armed conflict or making them take a direct part in hostilities.

9. UNHCHR extended its best wishes for a successful twenty-second session and assured the Committee of its continued support. The High Commissioner would ensure that all the resources necessary for its smooth operation were mobilized.

10. The CHAIRPERSON thanked Mr. Ramcharan for his good wishes and invited Committee members to make comments.

11. Ms. SARDENBERG said it was important to strengthen national capacity and inter-agency cooperation in order to improve the implementation of the Convention; she welcomed the idea of organizing a conference on juvenile justice.

12. The CHAIRPERSON endorsed the proposal to hold a conference on juvenile justice in 2002 with the participation of States parties and a wide range of partners. It might be a good idea to appoint a special rapporteur on the question of children and juvenile justice in order to prepare better for the conference.

13. Mr. RAMCHARAN (Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) encouraged all the organizations that would be attending the Committee's current session to make themselves known in order to strengthen inter-organization cooperation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CRC/C/88)

14. The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2)

15. The CHAIRPERSON reminded members that the Committee would be commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Convention during the current session, on 30 September and 1 October.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES (agenda item 3)

16. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) reported that, since its twenty-first session, the Committee had received initial reports from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Overseas Territories), Monaco, Oman and Turkey. Belarus, Spain, the Sudan, Argentina, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had submitted their second periodic reports. To date, 137 initial reports and 29 periodic reports had been received, i.e. a total of 166 reports, of which 104 had been considered. Fifty-six initial reports and 96 periodic reports were due and had not yet been submitted.

17. The CHAIRPERSON asked Committee members if they had any suggestions as to how to clear the backlog of reports for consideration.

18. Mr. DOEK said that it would be useful if steps could be taken to raise the number of members from 10 to 18 and said that the number of States that still needed to ratify the amendment to that effect so that it could enter into force was still far from being reached.

19. Ms. RAADI (UNHCHR) said that UNHCHR had sent several letters to the States parties in order to speed up ratification of the amendment.

20. Ms. MILLER (UNICEF) said that UNICEF was also working for its ratification in all countries where it had operations on the ground.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.50 a.m.